



1616 P STREET, N.W., SUITE 200 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
PHONE: 202-939-3800 • FAX: 202-939-3868

Media Advisory

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California Conservationist Wins 2004 National Wetlands Award

Barbara Salzman of Larkspur, California has won the 2004 National Wetlands Award for Wetland Community Leader. She will be honored at a ceremony on May 20th at the Senate Caucus Room in Washington, DC for her efforts with the Marin Audubon Society and Marin Baylands Advocates.

“For over 20 years, Barbara Salzman has led the Marin County environmental community and the Marin Audubon Society in a wetland acquisition and restoration program that rivals many government accomplishments,” said Wayne White, Field Supervisor, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “The acres of wetlands or diked former tidal marsh acquired and restored because of Barbara’s leadership continue to grow. Barbara is a model for a wetlands community leader.”

Salzman is president of the Marin Audubon Society and a founder of Marin Baylands Advocates. She and like-minded volunteers have worked for more than 25 years to fundraise, sponsor, and develop on-the-ground wetlands restoration projects. Salzman and the Marin Baylands Advocates are directly responsible for the permanent protection of 1,008 acres of baylands and have assisted in protecting an additional 1,600 acres now owned by the state of California.

Recently, Salzman spearheaded efforts to secure the purchase and preservation of the 632-acre Bahia site, which included stopping a housing development project by local referendum and raising the \$15.8 million necessary to purchase the site. She worked for 25 years to build financial, political, and community support for the project, which culminated in the successful purchase of the site in 2003.

“Barbara has been a steadfast, tireless advocate for the preservation of wetlands in Marin County,” said Ronald Miska, Marin County Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services. “I know of no one, absolutely no one, who shares her passion and dedication in this regard.”

Since 1989, the National Wetlands Awards program has honored exceptional individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary effort, innovation, and excellence in wetland conservation, research, or education through programs or projects at the regional, state, or local level. The program is co-sponsored by the Environmental Law Institute, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“We are grateful for the exceptional efforts of these awardees,” said Major General Carl A. Strock, Director of Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Their efforts to protect and preserve our nation’s wetlands help sustain healthy aquatic habitats for diverse species of plants, fish, and wildlife. The well-being of natural communities is essential to the quality of our lives.”

For more information please contact Erica Pencak at the Environmental Law Institute at (202) 939-3822 or wetlandsawards@eli.org, or visit www.eli.org/nwa/nwaprogram.htm.

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